

1976

HOBART

HISTORY

Hobart Historical Society notes

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Streetcars once rumbled over downtown streets

Forty years ago, Hobart residents could commute to Gary via streetcar, boarding the Gary Railway line at

Third and Main Street. Twenty five trips a day travelled Third and Washington Streets to Gary. Hobart was part of an extensive system of interurban street railcars which extended, at various times, as far as LaPorte, Chesterton, Valparaiso, Crown Point, Hobart, Gary, Hammond and Indiana Harbor.

The first attempt at a Gary-Hobart connection was in 1909 with the formation of the Gary, Hobart & Valparaiso Traction Company. After several false starts, the line got on its feet as the Gary & Hobart Traction Company which merged with Gary Railways in 1924.

Freight was also hauled from Hobart to Gary via streetcar. Gary and Hobart Traction had two boxcars assigned to ice haulage. The ice was cut from Lake

George, stored in an ice house in Hobart, and hauled into Gary for sale.

The days of streetcar travel in Hobart are recalled in a booklet, *Gary Railways*, just published in an updated and expanded version by the Central Electric Railfans' Association of Chicago.

Although the Gary Railways street railway system was only medium in size, it is of considerable interest to railroad buffs since it encompassed a fascinating array of rolling stock and served such a varied area--from highly industrialized Hammond, Indiana Harbor and Gary to busy towns such as Crown Point, Miller, and Hobart to rural countryside.

The Central Electric Railfans' Association originally published the history of Gary Railways in 1949 and updated and

enlarged it in 1975. The 36 page booklet includes text describing the complete history of the line from 1908 to 1947, 79 photographs, detailed maps, a roster of equipment, car diagrams, and a corporate family tree.

Gary Railways is available at the Hobart Historical Society Museum, 706 East Fourth Street, for \$4.00 per copy. The Museum is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The book may also be obtained from Central Electric Railfans Association, P.O. Box 503, Chicago, Illinois 60690, for \$4.00 prepaid.